



# COUNTERRECONNAISSANCE

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## IN TASK FORCE SECURITY OPERATIONS

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In warfare, common theory dictates that if you do not respect and learn from mistakes of the past, you are doomed to repeat them. German experiences on the Eastern front in the 1940s provide a historic perspective that supports the importance of effective security operations:

*Perhaps the most impressive characteristic of Russian infantry in the offense was its unmatched ability to infiltrate enemy positions....practically every Russian attack was preceded by large-scale infiltrations of small units and individual men. During the first night, a few men would infiltrate German positions and vanish in the forest. During the second night, reinforcements would bring the force up to platoon strength. In this manner, provided no countermeasures were taken, a whole*

*battalion group could be lodged in the rear of German lines within one week. The remedy [was] strongly manned lines, well organized in depth and continuously patrolled by men wide awake and alert. (From *On Infantry*, by John A. English, Praeger Publishers, 1984, pages 101-102.)*

Today, half a century later, potential infiltrators can range from Somali "technicals" and international drug smugglers to foes who are well trained and equipped. The enemy, in any case, is usually aware of the past and applies the lessons learned in crude but effective ways.

I want to discuss a number of issues associated with conducting counterreconnaissance (CR) as part of task force security operations. My intent is to help improve the way com-

manders approach the mission and help them develop a solid method to use in planning, preparing, and executing the CR mission.

The first part of the defensive battle that the brigade and battalion must win is the CR battle, and the deliberate integration of the battlefield operating systems (BOSs)—especially, intelligence, maneuver, and battle command—plays a significant role in the success of this fight. Commanders at every echelon must effectively visualize the fight, looking for information just as they would for the main battle area (MBA) fight.

Observations at the National Training Center (NTC), in both force-on-force and live-fire environments, have revealed two major points: Battalion task forces and company teams have problems in planning, preparing, and executing the CR fight, and visualizing and synchronizing that fight are the most difficult tasks for the commanders. The table shown here illustrates the effect of good versus poor reconnaissance efforts on units operating at the NTC.

Advancements in technology and the lethality of weapons make it vital that we deny the enemy his ability to observe and assess our own lethality and survivability. The BOSs provide a framework in which to examine the deficiencies and associated issues that affect the successful execution of the CR mission. The following discussion of BOSs will highlight issues as they apply to the planning, preparation, and execution of the CR mission, and will offer a brief overview of effective techniques.

### Intelligence

Gathering and assimilating battlefield information lays the groundwork for successful security operations. Trends and observations indicate that the S-2's intelligence products—reconnaissance and surveillance (R&S) plans and situational templates—rarely support the development and synchronization of the CR plan. The lack of credibility and availability in S-2 products, along with their level of detail, inhibits the integration of intelligence into the planning process.

Field Manual 34-2-1, *TTPs for Reconnaissance and Surveillance and Intelligence Support to CR*, Chapter 10, defines specific requirements for the S-3 and S-2 in developing and executing the battalion CR plan: "The S-2 plays a critical role in developing the battlefield situation in enough detail to allow the S-3 to target, destroy, or suppress the enemy's R&S assets." This is the relationship that must exist between maneuver and intelligence.

All too often, commanders and staffs do not have a true appreciation for terrain or its effects on the ability to kill the enemy. A generic map reconnaissance is usually the extent of terrain analysis and appreciation. Attempts to integrate the use of terrain-based computer software products have fallen short of the inherent potential. Although technology cannot replace the commander's responsibility for conducting map and physical reconnaissance, commanders and S-2s should be familiar with the software and its potential link to both direct and indirect fire planning.

The S-2 must understand who his customers are (task force commander, S-3, CR force commander, and scout platoon

OUTCOME ACCORDING TO QUALITY OF RECON EFFORT				
QUALITY OF R&S EFFORT	NO. OF BATTLES	BATTLE OUTCOME		
		SUCCESS	FAILURE	STANDOFF
<b>BLUE FORCE</b>				
GOOD	13	9	1	3
POOR	50	4	38	8
<b>OPPOSING FORCE</b>				
GOOD	28	26	1	1
POOR	5	0	5	0

leader) and what they need; and these customers must clearly tell him their requirements.

Commanders need to know the answers to the following questions: Who is the enemy (regimental or division reconnaissance elements, mounted or dismounted patrols)? What type and number of vehicles will be in sector? What is their killing capability? Where will the enemy be vulnerable, and why? What is this enemy trying to do, where is he going, and how will he get there?

Most S-2s present this information in terms of a generic enemy composition and disposition, along with the enemy's most probable or most dangerous courses of action. The key is a clear articulation of the enemy situation so that soldiers can actually visualize his courses of action. Clear understanding of the enemy's likely courses of action promotes confidence and initiative in both leaders and soldiers.

The unit commander must have solid facts about terrain and logical predictions about the enemy. These facts include key terrain, natural obstacles and choke points, intervisibility lines, observation, cover and concealment, obstacles, and avenues of approach. The S-2's predictions must also account for enemy dismount and air avenues, both of which are often overlooked.

Accurate, responsive intelligence will insure the proper coverage of weapons, sensors, and optics on critical areas of the battlefield. The S-2's situational template gives the force an initial glance at the enemy and his tactics in relation to the terrain. If the maneuver element uses a 1:50,000-scale map, the S-2 should develop his product in the same scale, but the use of large-scale concept sketches can add to the actual working products.

### Maneuver

Crucial in the forward area fight is movement relative to the enemy that puts him at a disadvantage. Commanders usually apply the looker-shooter concept as a standing operating procedure (SOP): The force array incorporates Bradleys on the flanks, tanks in the center as the main direct fire force, and scouts forward in sector as the eyes of the commander. The problem is that the array of forces on the ground results from a

drill rather than the commander's METT-T analysis. As a result, the final placement of individual vehicles and observation posts fails to make the most of friendly weapon capabilities, the terrain, or enemy vulnerabilities. If the commander does not personally inspect his force array as part of building the engagement area (EA), the first indication of positioning flaws will become evident when the enemy penetrates the sector unopposed.

Commanders often do not consider the complexities associated with forward security operations—the manning of passage and contact points, demolition guard responsibilities, rearward passage of lines through friendly EAs, and obstacles. The failure to address these requirements often leads to complications, ranging from fratricide to overall mission failure.

Commanders fail to consider the capabilities, as well as the potential risk, involved in incorporating all available assets into the CR fight. Assets often overlooked include dismounted in-

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***The deliberate integration of the battlefield operating systems plays a significant role in the success of the counterreconnaissance fight.***

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fantry, air defense artillery, engineers, mortars, and field artillery systems, including fire support vehicles.

Doctrine provides some specific guides to help the task force and the company team develop courses of action, but a rigid application of doctrinal fundamentals will not solve all operational problems. These fundamentals provide a common reference point to support the application of troop-leading procedures (TLPs). They also provide a yardstick against which to measure the completeness of task force and company team planning. Key task force fundamentals, in accordance with FM 71-2, *The Tank and Mechanized Infantry Task Force*, include the following:

- Specify the security force mission.
- Provide enough assets, as determined by the commander's analysis of METT-T.
- Establish security early and well forward.
- Put security in the right place.
- Provide adequate command and control for security.
- Plan to recover forward security elements.
- Plan for subsequent reconnaissance operations.
- Establish local security.

Failure to consider these fundamentals early in the planning phase will hinder forward security and MBA efforts. Commanders must focus and synchronize S-2 products with TLPs. True synchronization begins when operational graphics, platoon sector sketches, and crew range cards show a link with the S-2's situational template and the R&S plan. Range cards and sector sketches are a form of backbrief from subordinate to commander. The quality data in these products will alert the CR commander to make modifications to overcome conditions (deadspace, intervisibility lines) that may affect the di-

rect-fire plan. The application of direct-fire principles will increase the lethality and survivability of the CR force. Current direct-fire principles, according to the U.S. Army Infantry School's Student Handout (SH) 7-45, *Fire Planning Handbook*, include the following:

- Mass fires.
- See that fire plans are completely understood.
- Focus fires.
- Distribute fires.
- Shift fires.
- Rehearse the fire plan.

If an evaluation is made using the current principles, the fire plan can be effectively modified and evaluated. The commander must ask: Can the force mass at least two-thirds of its combat power at more than one location? Do the soldiers understand the fire plan? How will we focus fires both during the day and at night? These are just a few of the questions commanders must ask and answer to determine the effectiveness of the plan.

On today's complex battlefield, solid and proven methods are needed for planning and combat preparation. Commanders must develop and implement fundamentally sound fire planning SOPs at every training opportunity. Commanders at every echelon must understand the capabilities and limitations of weapons, both enemy and friendly. The fire plan must maximize the effectiveness of the available systems while producing target effects sufficient to destroy the enemy reconnaissance elements.

### **Fire Support**

Synchronizing fires with maneuver increases the lethality and survivability of the force. Unfortunately, commanders tend to overlook the value of indirect fires in the CR fight. The lack of trigger development and a clear concept for fires negates the potential lethality of artillery systems in the forward area fight. Mortar platoons rarely occupy positions that can support the CR mission. If mortars are to be effective, responsive triggers must be planned and developed.

The task force must produce a fire support plan for the CR fight. Fire support officers (FSOs) in the task force and the CR force must plan fires in direct coordination with the S-2. Communication between the FSOs and the observers tasked to execute the fight is vital. The plan must focus on maximizing weapons effects against enemy vulnerabilities at critical points on the battlefield—choke points, dead space, dismount avenues, and all routes leading into and out of sector. The FSO must think like the enemy and consider where indirect fires will significantly disrupt or deny enemy reconnaissance mission objectives. Clearly defined engagement criteria, with full consideration of the enemy and his tactics, are extremely effective. Planners must understand the supporting role of indirect fires and the advantage it provides the friendly force when used with a clear task and purpose.

### **Battle Command**

Commanders must continually visualize the battlefield. Task force commanders and S-3s tend to divorce themselves from the physical aspects of developing EAs and synchronizing all

available task force assets. The challenge for both the task force and the CR commanders is to visualize the battle and articulate that vision. If they do not, the result may be the failure of the CR fight and, as a result, the loss of the MBA fight.

The clear delineation of command relationships (attached, operational control, direct support, general support) is usually the exception rather than the rule. As a result, available assets—mortars, scouts, ground surveillance radar, and combat observation and lasing teams—are not synchronized with the maneuver force, and their capabilities are not fully exploited. Control is inherent in battle command. CR commanders often fail to establish command and control networks that effectively link observers to the maneuver elements. A lack of planning significantly inhibits the commander's ability to command and control his force. The collective nature of the CR force requires a communication network that supports the commander's intent responsively and efficiently. Figure 1 provides a communication concept based on a generic force makeup (Blue Team and Red Team represent platoon-size elements). The CR commander must develop and rehearse a communication network that meets force requirements as the METT-T analysis dictates.

The leader reconnaissance is becoming a lost art. Many attempts are perfunctory or pro forma instead of enabling the commander to confirm or modify initial plans. The task force commander, S-3, S-2, FSO, scout, and CR commander should meet forward in sector whenever possible to improve synchronization and visualization. Another technique involves backbriefs in the forward area on terrain that overlooks the decisive areas forward in sector. The commander's intent becomes clearer when leaders meet face-to-face on the actual terrain to discuss how and where to kill the enemy.

The question of who commands the CR force is one that neither doctrine nor a quick recommendation will answer. Potential CR commanders include the S-3, the HHC commander, the company or team commander, and the scout platoon leader. METT-T must determine who commands and controls the CR force. Whoever this is, the key to success are

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leader visualization, definitive command relationships, aggressive troop-leading procedures, and controlled execution.

A synchronization matrix will address the command challenges presented by the CR mission (Figure 2). This matrix helps the commander visualize the battle, identify critical decision points, and conduct rehearsals. It should be a working document, complete with updates and dissemination to all.

The synchronization matrix is a valuable tool if used to coordinate, visualize, and execute the battle from start to fin-

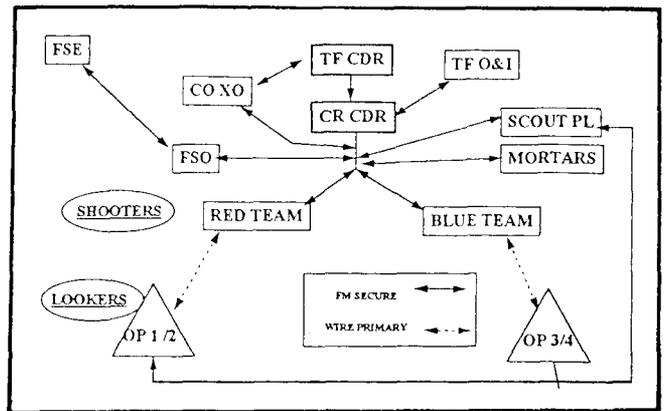


Figure 1

EXECUTION/SYNCHRONIZATION MATRIX				
Task organization: 2 Mech plt; 1 Armor plt attached (DTG); 1 Mortar plt (OPCON) (DTG); 1 Scout plt attached (DTG)		Mission: Co B defends BP1 (ignr, DTG), conducts CR along PL Golani (DTG), assists passage of covering force, on order defend BP1 (ignr); Commander's Intent: Destroy enemy recon (division and/or regiment) in EA North and South 1&2, combining the effects of obstacles, direct and indirect fires. Destroy 1MRB in EA Main with direct fires supported by a blocking obstacle.		
ITEM	ENEMY ACTION	OBSERVER ACTION	SHOOTER ACTION	COMMENTS
1	None	Scout route to PL GOLANI/ occupy OP 1-3 MLT (DTG) confirm surveillance plan/ 50% observer coverage	Blue and Red occupy FWD BP MLT (DTG)	White, develop Main BP for Blue and Red, O/D provide relief to Blue or Red Team
2	CF contact with div recon	100% observer coverage of EA North & SOUTH (1)	FWD elements REDCON 1	White, continue BP preparation
3	Div recon destroyed	50% coverage EA North & SOUTH (1)	Red, make contact with CF lead element at contact point (G)-O/D close Lane GREEN-Blue; observatover EA NORTH & SOUTH for lookers until passage complete and Lane GREEN is closed	No change
4	Reg't recon detected vic NAJ 1	100% coverage all EAs	Red & Blue occupy ABF psns Red, NORTH 1&2 (primary)-SOUTH 1&2 (alt) Mortars prep WP 001 & 2 FSO prep WP 002 & 3	White, REDCON 1
5	Enemy BMP ID EA North (1)	OP 2 adjust fire WP001 when executed	No change	"Red, TOW EA NORTH at your cmd"; mortar fire WP001 at my cmd
6	2 BMP ID EA NORTH 1	OP 2 continue updates	Red engage at your cmd Mortars fire WP001	

Figure 2

ish, including the occupation of the screen, continuous security, defeat of the enemy's reconnaissance elements, and destruction of the enemy's main body as the culminating point.

Rehearsals must be conducted if the collected task force, brigade, and company team assets are to operate as an effective force. Commanders must aggressively plan to employ such rehearsal techniques as backbriefs, along with full or partial rehearsals as time permits. Rehearsals bring any flaws in the plan to the surface for immediate resolution and also help the soldiers envision the fight. A rehearsal using secure FM radio communications is a valuable tool during hours of limited visibility. The first engagement will be costly if the unit does not rehearse.

### The Forgotten Three

Three of the BOSs—logistics; mobility, countermobility, and survivability; and air defense—are rarely considered as part of the CR mission or security operations as a whole. Casualty evacuation and the overall sustainment of the CR force usually result from reaction instead of deliberate, coordinated planning. The lack of planning reduces the survivability of the soldiers and the maintainability of the equipment.

The positioning of the forward and main aid stations requires careful consideration. Providing the CR force with

additional maintenance and medical support will allow the unit to fix assets forward and also allow it some autonomy.

Company team commanders rarely consider the use of obstacles to shape the battlefield in the forward area. Obstacle integration, and the advantage it gives direct and indirect systems, should be an immediate consideration in all fire plans. Company team hasty and protective obstacles are also a critical consideration that requires immediate integration. Obstacle planning must be continuous and done to support the direct fire effort and protect the force.

Because of its often static role, the CR force is separate from the main body and therefore vulnerable to enemy air attack. The CR force is particularly vulnerable to enemy air during the occupation and collapse of the forward area screen. The commander who fails to consider this contingency will suffer unnecessary losses for this failure. Active and passive

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air defense measures must be part of the overall task force and CR force plan. Commanders must actively prepare, rehearse, and execute a collective air defense plan.

Doctrine provides a foundation for company team planning and preparation. FM 71-1, *The Tank and Mechanized Infantry Company Team*, identifies the CR force as consisting of two elements—surveillance (scouts) and counterreconnaissance (company team).

In addition to FM 71-1, the CR commander's primary guides include ARTEP 71-1 MTP; *Mission Training Plan for the Tank and Mechanized Infantry Company Team*; FM 7-10, *The Infantry Rifle Company*, FM 7-20, *The Infantry Battalion*, and FM 17-95, *Cavalry Operations*, and their discussions of security operations. As a part of security operations, the company team screen must include one or more of the following tasks:

- Deny observation of main defensive positions.
- Destroy enemy reconnaissance.
- Deceive enemy reconnaissance as to the location of the main defensive position.
- Deny enemy flanking maneuvers.

The many potential screen tasks highlight the need for task force and CR commanders to provide a clear task and purpose to focus subordinate TLPs. The execution of security operations in Panama, Southwest Asia, Haiti, Africa, or Korea will have unique requirements as dictated by METT-T, but the processes we implement to prepare our soldiers must be consistent and reliable, with confirmation and modification through training.

Doctrinally, the screen provides early warning, impedes and harasses the enemy with supporting indirect fires, and within its capability destroys enemy reconnaissance elements. Unit METLs usually do not support the CR mission. Units rarely address the screen or CR mission in their home-station training.

Critical tasks as expressed in FM 71-1 include the following:

- Maintain continuous surveillance of all high-speed approaches into the sector.
- Destroy or repel all reconnaissance patrols.
- Locate the forward security element and determine its direction of movement.
- Make the best use of artillery and mortars to delay, confuse, and destroy the enemy.

The outline of potential company team tasks in FM 71-1 further amplifies the need for METL tasks that support the development of operational processes to enhance the planning, preparation, and execution of the CR mission. Aggressive planning and preparation by both the task force and the CR commanders will reduce stress on soldiers and make the most of the force's lethality and survivability.

Commanders must develop, train, and modify the processes used in security-oriented troop leading. Feedback from training will ensure that any necessary modifications are made to increase staff efficiency and overall unit combat readiness. Doctrine is the start point, training links the soldier with doctrine, and combat confirms and modifies both training and doctrine.

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